



CAPITOL UPDATE

OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Penny Bernard Schaber

Serving the heart of Appleton



Wisconsinites deserve leadership that can be trusted to take job creation seriously

When I returned to Madison this fall, it was amidst promises from Gov. Walker of a new direction toward bipartisanship, and a setting aside of the rancor that enveloped the Capitol earlier this year. I was encouraged to see these words followed up with action, when Republican committee chairs began holding hearings and even votes on bills authored by Democrats—most notably my bill to close the loophole that allowed an Appleton day care center to operate without a license. However, when it came time to consider legislation for the Special Session on Jobs, it became clear that when it comes to bipartisanship in Madison, for every step forward, Republicans have taken two more back.

For example, last week, the Assembly considered a bill by Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) that would give a payroll tax cut to small businesses that hire new employees. This bill is based on a federal law that has already shown to be effective, and passed the Assembly last year on an astounding 96-1 bipartisan vote. Yet rather than pass the bill again and make it easier and cheaper for small businesses to hire, the Republican majority instead voted to send the bill back to committee, where it has been waiting without a hearing since January.

That same day, the Assembly also voted on AB 72, a bill to allow the Public Service Commission's wind energy regulations to move forward. Despite the fact that the bill that gave the PSC authority over wind energy regulations passed last session with a strong, bipartisan majority, Gov. Walker and legislative Republicans have used the rules process to cripple wind energy production in Wisconsin, leading to the cancellation of several major wind projects and killing hundreds of jobs. AB 72 would provide certainty to developers and allow major wind energy projects to go forward, creating hundreds or possibly thousands of jobs. Unfortunately, Republicans once again voted to send it back to committee.

Instead of working together on bipartisan legislation to create jobs, Gov. Walker and legislative Republicans are using the Special Session on Jobs to advance partisan legislation that favors powerful special interests. For example, Republicans backed a bill to ban 'Earn a Buck,' despite the fact that three of Wisconsin's key industries and employers are in opposition to the bill. The forestry industry, the paper industry and the agricultural industry all are against this bill, which passed the Assembly on Oct. 18. They opposed it because they have a legitimate concern that this bill could harm jobs and business. These three industries represent billions of dollars to the Wisconsin economy and tens of thousands of jobs. Too many deer can devastate forest and crops. The DNR or the newly hired "Deer Czar" should be part of the decision process.

Another bill, Special Session Assembly Bill 14, is an attempt to lower the interest rate paid to individuals who win personal injury and consumer credit card cases. Currently companies

that are ordered to pay a judgment to an individual must add 12% in annual interest if they don't pay it in full. If passed, huge companies would only have to pay 4.25% while people would still have to pay 12% in interest. The *Appleton Post Crescent* editorial board summed it up well: "essentially, the bill favors multimillion-dollar companies over people who have been wronged by them. That's unfair."

The people of Wisconsin want us to focus on working together to create family-supporting jobs, and there are bipartisan solutions that would do just that. Unfortunately, the Republicans in Madison have decided to ignore ideas from the other side of the aisle, even when they have been shown to be broadly popular with members from both parties. The good news is that there is still time to choose a bipartisan path, and finish this Special Session by passing legislation that both sides can agree on. This week, Assembly Democrats have introduced a package of bills that will improve workforce development and job creation by helping the unemployed learn the skills that employers are looking for and connect them with job openings. I encourage my colleagues to support these bills.



Penny Bernard Schaber
57th Assembly District

Question of the Month:

Creating jobs can be difficult and complex. In Wisconsin, we have often relied on creating tax credits and exemptions for certain activities that may create jobs.

In your opinion, have these changes been successful? Have you been able to use a tax credit or deduction to benefit your business or create jobs?

Make sure to send in your response to rep.bernardschaber@legis.wi.gov or to my office at PO Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708. I will make sure to take any input I receive into consideration.

Blue Books:

The 2011-2012 Blue Book is available! If you would like a copy, please send me an email with your name and address, and the words "Blue Book" in the subject line.